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ACTION: NONE INFO: DOMDS, DONOVA, ODPB-B, ODPD-D, ODPS-S,
OPCTR/EEWE, RF, STATDICT, FILE, EUR/BNL, EUR/RR, EUR/SA, CI/PROD,
CRES/IRC, FBIS/WE-2, ICS/HC/EU, PPS/CLBC, (10/W)

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HEADER

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DE RUEHBS #8464/01 1721356

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O 201356Z JUN 88

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3581

RUEADWD/DA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEBWB/DOJ WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2787

RUFHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0601

BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 08464

USIA

USIA FOR P/M, EU (SHIPPE);
ARMY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS;
JUSTICE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS;
STATE FOR EUR/NE, PA;
PARIS FOR LEGATT

E.O. 12356: N/A

BODY

SUBJECT: BELGIAN MEDIA REACTION: EX NAZI ROBERT VERBELEN
CASE

REF: STATE 194715

1. THE U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REPORT STATING THAT
BELGIAN CONVICTED WAR CRIMINAL ROBERT VERBELEN WORKED IN
AUSTRIA FOR TEN YEARS AS A SECRET AGENT FOR THE U.S.
ARMY RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE IN THE BELGIAN PRESS

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2003 2006

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

FOR COORDINATION WITH DoJ/OSI
State

SATURDAY.

2. SAMPLE HEADLINES:

- "THE AMERICANS 'DISCOVER' SS VERBELEN'S PAST" (INDEPENDENT LE SOIR - CIRC. 213,000);
- "FROM FLEMISH SS TO U.S. SERVICES" (CONSERVATIVE LA MEUSE/LA LANTERNE - CIRC. 133,000);
- "A BELGIAN WAR CRIMINAL, AMERICAN AGENT" (CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC LA LIBRE BELGIQUE - CIRC. 90,000);
- "ROBERT VERBELEN SPIED FOR THE AMERICANS" (CONSERVATIVE LA DERNIERE HEURE - CIRC. 100,000);
- "'VERBELEN WAS A SPY FOR TEN YEARS IN AUSTRIA" (CATHOLIC HET BELANG VAN LIMBURG -CIRC. 98,000);
- "U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT RELEASES REPORT: WAR CRIMINAL VERBELEN WAS U.S. SPY" (CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN -CIRC. 187,000).

3. CONSERVATIVE HET LAATSTE NIEUWS (CIRC. 304,000) CARRIED A FULL-PAGE REPORT ON THE CASE UNDER THE HEADING "AMERICANS ADMIT: ROBERT VERBELEN WORKED FOR CIA." THE PAPER WROTE THAT "THE PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. REPORT REOPENS ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL WOUNDS FROM WORLD WAR II IN BELGIUM. A QUESTION HERE IS WHETHER THIS REOPENED 'VERBELEN CASE' CAN ESCALATE INTO A SECOND 'BARBIE CASE'" THE PAPER ALSO INTERVIEWED RELATIVES OF PEOPLE REPORTEDLY MURDERED BY VERBELEN AND HIS MEN DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION.

4. UNDER THE HEADING "LATE 'REVELATIONS' ABOUT VERBELEN", LIBERAL CATHOLIC DE STANDAARD (CIRC. 377,000) WROTE: "THE WIRE SERVICES COMPARE THE VERBELEN CASE WITH THAT OF KLAUS BARBIE....THEY RECALL THAT VERBELEN WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA BY A BELGIAN MILITARY COURT FOR THE MURDER OF 101 PEOPLE AND THE TORTURING OF U.S. AIR FORCE PILOTS. THEY FORGET TO MENTION, HOWEVER, THAT VERBELEN APPEARED BEFORE AN AUSTRIAN COURT FOR ALL THESE CRIMES AND WAS ACQUITTED IN 1965. THE WIRE SERVICES ALSO FORGET THAT ALREADY IN 1984, A JEWISH ORGANIZATION CLAIMED VERBELEN TORTURED TWO U.S. PILOTS. GENE DINGLEDINE, ONE OF THE U.S. PILOTS WHO VISITED BELGIUM AT THAT TIME, TESTIFIED THEN THAT THEY WERE NEVER TORTURED BY VERBELEN. THE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT TODAY, AT THE REQUEST OF THE B'NAI B'RITH, DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE TESTIMONIES, AND THEREFORE CREATES THE IMPRESSION OF BEING DESIGNED FOR ATMOSPHERICS RATHER THAN (TO ESTABLISH) THE HISTORICAL TRUTH."

5. INDEPENDENT LE SOIR (CIRC. 213,000) WROTE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S ANNOUNCEMENT "CAUSED THE GREATEST SURPRISE IN BELGIUM WHERE THE USE OF VERBELEN BY THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE SERVICES HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AN ESTABLISHED FACT FOR SOME TEN YEARS....THE ACTIVITIES OF

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THE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE BELGIAN SS FOR THE COUNTER-ESPIONAGE SERVICES OF THE U.S. ARMY ARE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. VERBELEN, WHO PRESENTLY LIVES PEACEFULLY IN AUSTRIA...CLAIMED THAT IN 1955, WHEN AUSTRIA RECOVERED ITS INDEPENDENCE, HE SAVED IT FROM A COMMUNIST PLOT. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? (HISTORIAN) ALBERT DE JONGHE WONDERS WHAT WAS THE USEFULNESS FOR THE AMERICANS OF A MAN WHO WAS PRIMARILY AND PROBABLY EXCLUSIVELY A BLOODTHIRSTY, ROUGHNECK SOLDIER, THE LEADER OF A MOB OF THUGS. WAS HE AN INFILTRATION AGENT OR A DOUBLE AGENT? - "THE DISCLOSURE BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS EVEN MORE MYSTERIOUS. WHY THIS SUDDEN REVELATION ABOUT A KILLER, SINCE IT IS CONSTANT PRACTICE THAT REVELATIONS ABOUT ACTIVITIES BY THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES ARE MADE ONLY EXCEPTIONALLY, AND FOR HIGH POLITICAL REASONS. WHY UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 08464

USIA

USIA FOR P/M, EU (SHIPPE);
ARMY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS;
JUSTICE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS;
STATE FOR EUR/NE, PA;
PARIS FOR LEGATT

E.O. 12356: N/A

SUBJECT: BELGIAN MEDIA REACTION: EX NAZI ROBERT VERBELEN DID THE DAMS, THAT HAVE PROTECTED VERBELEN SO FAR, YIELD AT ONE POINT? IS THIS A LEAK, RESULTING FROM AN INTERNECINE WAR IN THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION?"

SNOW

ADMIN

END OF MESSAGE

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EUR/BNL
ACTION

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FRP: ,2, , , , ,

STAFF

ACTION: EUR/BNL-3 (041) INFO: DOMDS, EPO/EUR, EUDORECORD, EUSE, ODPD-D,
QA/FILE, RF, FILE, EUR/CA-2, EUR/CI, C/PPS/SEO, CI/CLFL, PPS/AMB-2,
(11/W)

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TOR: 221255Z JUN 88

IN 9343128
C 32175

S E C R E T 221249Z JUN 88 STAFF

FOR COORDINATION WITH ed DoJ/OSI

CITE C 32175

TO: IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR.

WNINTEL C

SUBJECT: LIAISON-RELATED REQUEST FOR INFO RE:
BELGIAN EX-SS COMMANDANT ROBERT JAN VERBELEN

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2003 2006

1. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE CABLE IMMEDIATE CAPSULE SUMMARY INFO ON VERBELEN AND, AS FACTS WARRANT, CONFIRMATION PNWORLD HAD NO DEALINGS OR CONNECTION WITH SUBJECT. ALSO, PLEASE OBTAIN AND POUCH OFFICIAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON THIS CASE.

2. NEWLY ARRIVED C QUERIED BY LATTER IN GENERAL TERMS RE: BACKGROUND OF CASE BELGIAN CIT ROBERT JAN ((VERBELEN)) WHO, DURING WORLD WAR II, HELD POSITION OF COMMANDANT IN FLEMISH S.S. AND ALSO APPARENTLY WORKED FOR U.S. ARMY C.I.C. IN 1965. SUBJECT WAS ACQUITTED ON WAR CRIMES CHARGE BY COURT IN AUSTRIA, WHERE HE WENT INTO POST-WAR EXILE, WAS NATURALIZED, AND STILL RESIDES. IN BELGIUM, HOWEVER, SUBJECT HAD BEEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH FOR WAR CRIMES IN ABSENTIA IN 1947, AND FROM BELGIAN STANDPOINT THIS SENTENCE STILL STANDS.

3. C QUERY NO DOUBT PRECIPITATED BY FLURRY OF MEDIA REPORTING OVER PREVIOUS WEEKEND ABOUT U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S COINCIDENTAL DISCLOSURE THAT VERBELEN WORKED FOR ARMY C.I.C. IN 1946-56. PERHAPS PREDICTABLY, BELGIAN PRESS COVERAGE REFLECTED SOME SURPRISE THAT AMERICANS WOULD HAVE EMPLOYED AND BY IMPLICATION "HELPED" A FORMER SS'ER WHO WAS UNDER DEATH SENTENCE IN BELGIUM.

4. C BELIEVES WOULD ASSIST IN GETTING OFF TO GOOD START WITH C (AND OTHER LIAISON CONTACTS) IF AT FOLLOWUP MEETING NEXT FEW DAYS HE COULD PROVIDE ASSURANCES THAT PNWORLD FOR ITS PART NEVER HAD DEALINGS OR CONNECTION WITH VERBELEN IF THAT NOT THE CASE, WOULD OF COURSE HELP IF WE COULD BE ADVISED OF ANY MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING WHAT CONTACT(S) PNWORLD MAY HAVE HAD WITH HIM IN 1946-56 PERIOD. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE CAPSULE SUMMARY OF ACTUAL FACTS RE: VERBELEN EMPLOYMENT BY U.S. GOVERNMENT AS BACKGROUND FOR ANY POSSIBLE FURTHER DISCUSSION THIS SUBJECT WITH C AND C PLEASE REPLY IMMEDIATE.

5. FILE: DEFER. INDEX: DEFER. DECL OADR DRV HUM 4-82.
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